Oh no! The community is growing!

Ben Cotton

InvenioRDM 2022 Annual Partner Meeting

@FunnelFiasco

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Housekeeping

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Housekeeping

- Pronouns: he/him
- The usual disclaimers
- License: CC BY-SA 4.0
- Kind things: @FunnelFiasco
- Unkind things: `/dev/null`
- Questions at the end

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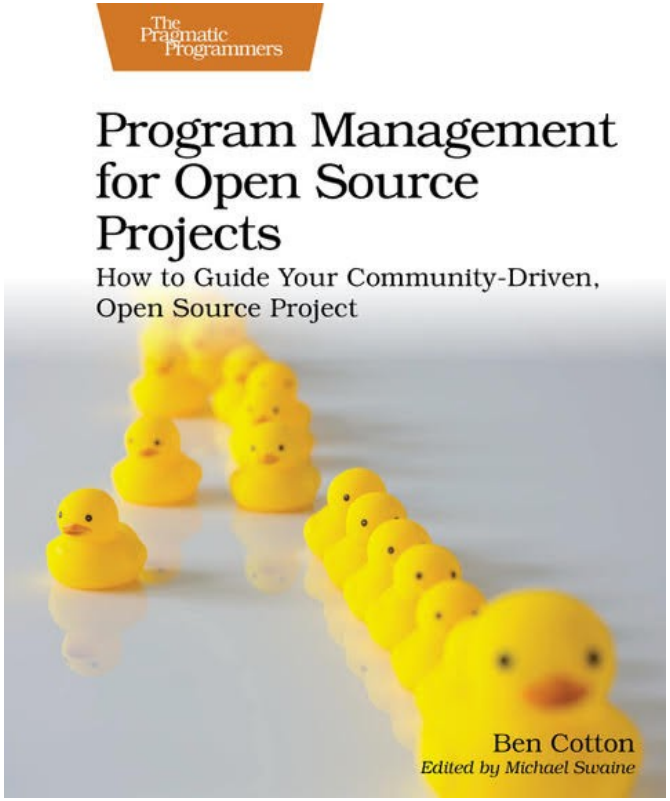
Shameless plug


The Pragmatic Programmers
Program Management for Open Source Projects
How to Guide Your Community-Driven, Open Source Project
Ben Cotton
Edited by Michael Swaine

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Agenda

- A growing community: a blessing and a curse
- Taking the next steps forward
- Develop processes
- Ending on a high note

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A growing community: a blessing and a curse

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Signs of success

- Growing contributor base
- More bug reports and PRs
- People are using the software

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Growth brings challenges

- User growth outpaces contributor growth
- Contributor growth outpaces process improvements
- Brooks' Law is real
- New skills are required

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Taking the next steps forward

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You don’t have to fix everything all at once

- Community improvement is iterative

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Optimize for contributor engagement

- **Retain existing contributors**
- **Attract new contributors**
  - Don’t forget the user-to-contributor pipeline
- **Make contributing easier**

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So...ignore users?

- Of course not!
- But contributors have to scale with users

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Document everything!

- Including your vision and mission statements
- How to get started
- Where to find the metaphorical bathrooms
- Include the *why*, not just the how

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Develop processes

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No more process than necessary

“The process is there to serve the community, the community is not there to serve the process.” — Ben Cotton

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Feature planning process

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Goals

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Coordination
- *Not* gatekeeping

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Stages

- Proposal
- Comment
- Approval
- Follow-up

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Proposal

- **What will you do?**
- **How does it benefit the project?**
- **Who is impacted? How?**
  - Other developers
  - Users and downstreams
  - Release engineering
  - etc
- **What's the contingency plan?**

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Comment and approval

- Everyone gets a voice
- Not everyone gets a vote

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Follow up

- Evaluate completeness
- Invoke contingency plans

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Example: Fedora Changes process

- https://docs.fedoraproject.org/en-US/program_management/changes_policy/

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Bug/PR triage process

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Bug triage questions

- Is this a bug?
- Is it a duplicate?
- Is it a security bug?
- Is it filed in the right place?
- Is it reproducible?
- Does it say what happened?

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Bug prioritizing questions

- Can physical harm result?
- Does it cause data loss or corruption?
- Does it permit unauthorized access?
- Does it reduce accessibility?
- Is the default configuration affected?
- Is there a *reasonable* workaround?
- Does the bug affect all platforms?
- Does it embarrass you?

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Pull request triage

- All of the above, plus...
- Conformity to style
- Passing tests
- DCO, CLA, etc
- Do you care?
- Will you maintain it?

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How?

- Make someone accountable for it
- Document the process
- Don’t fixate on scores

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Closing bugs

You totally should!

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To close or not to close

- Sends a clear signal of intent
- Makes the tracker easier to scan
- Makes people angry
- “I was going to work on that someday”
- Represents a catalog of known* issues

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When to close a bug

- When it’s fixed
- If it’s a duplicate, invalid, or spam
- If it’s missing information
- If you can’t reproduce it
- If the version reaches end of life
- If you know you can’t or won’t fix it

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How to close a bug

- Set and communicate a policy *ahead of time*
- Explain why
- Give instructions to reopen
- Ignore the complaints

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End on a high note

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End on a high note

- Things will change, but hold on to your values
- Scale is hard, but doable
- The right answer is what works for your community

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Let’s talk about it

- https://duckalignment.academy
- https://funnelfiasco.com/blog
- Twitter: @funnelfiasco
- LinkedIn: http://funnelfias.co/linkedin
- My book: http://funnelfias.co/bcosp

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